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THE SHAMROCK,

— OR —

IRELAND'S THREEFOLD LOVE.

A BEAUTIFUL SERMON PREACHED

BY THE

REV. MARTIN CALLAGHAN,

— ON —

ST. PATRICK'S DAY,

— IN —

ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH, MONTREAL.

March 17th, 1877.



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REMARKS.

The beautiful discourse, which we here present to the public, will, we trust, produce on the minds of the readers that profound impression, which it left on the four thousand breathless hearers who filled that magnificent Irish sanctuary, St. Patrick's Church, on the feast of Ireland's Apostle. They were proud to see a young priest, so pious and gifted, treating them so profusely with the sweetest flowers of Irish history and the most balmly perfumes of Irish virtues. The sermon lasted one hour and fatigued no one. The preacher spoke distinctly and was distinctly heard; he spoke plainly and was plainly understood. Never perhaps had they so well understood the beauty of Ireland's Trefoil, as when he developed before them the three-fold love of Catholic Ireland; her love for the faith, for the priest, for the Pope. Centuries ago Patrick held up the Shamrock as an emblem of the adorable Trinity, to-day it is held out by one of his promising sons as the emblem of the Irish Catholic heart.

It is beautiful indeed to see this spiritual Shamrock ever green in the soul of Ireland. It is glorious indeed to see her come forth victorious after so long and so dire a persecution, wounded in truth but ever the same, ready to die for her faith, her priest and her Pope. O beautiful love! Ever active charity!

As active after victory as in the heat of the struggle. Its direction alone is changed. In battle it fights for existence, in peace it springs up in wholesome growth. Unparalleled perhaps in the history of nations is the progress which Ireland has made these last fifty years in the general diffusion of education and knowledge. How few could read forty years ago ! How few now who can not ! Then, schools were rare, now they abound. Clergymen who had to seek education in foreign countries and foreign tongues, now see educational establishment flourish at home, not merely for home clergy, but for the supply of missionary countries. Let the emigrant return to his native town and he will be surprised to find educational and religious houses which have sprung up in every leading city and town. Let him visit with pride these rich and noble cathedrals, which have wonderfully multiplied, and which may be very fairly compared to any in the world. Yes, there is life in Catholic Ireland, because there is love, a three-fold love. Yes, the Irishman is fond of the old sod, but on the old sod there are many things he may justly be proud of. Let Ireland remember the days old ! but let her look with pride on her great vitality and rapid growth of the present day.

SERMON.

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom He hath chosen for His inheritance.”—Ps. xxxii, v. 12.

MY LORD: DEAR BRETHREN :

The words which I have just quoted bear unquestionably the impress of Eternal Wisdom, and challenge universal respect. In their sublime simplicity, they convey a lesson which is invested with paramount importance—a lesson which, if carefully studied and properly applied, cannot fail to remove the manifold evils which afflict humanity, and inaugurate for society an unparalleled era of splendor. Nations, like individuals, yearn for happiness, and exert in its pursuit all the energy in their power. Many, unfortunately, know not in what it consists, mistaking as they do the shadow for the substance, the appearance for the reality. Too often have they recourse to means which are noways calculated to realize the object they desire so much. It is not merely in the acquisition of temporal advantages, not merely in the enjoyment of commercial prosperity, military grandeur or intellectual celebrity, that true national happiness should be sought. It is not in sacrificing the goods of eternity for the transitory goods of time; not in trampling under foot all claims of honor, justice and religion; not in destroying the relations which bind us to our Creator that it can be found. No, no; it should be sought and can be found only in His knowledge, love and service, only in the recognition of His universal sovereignty, and in the fidelity to His laws: “Blessed,” exclaims the inspired Psalmist, “is the nation whose God is the

Lord." Well may Christian and Catholic Ireland call herself "blessed" in the true and full acceptance of the term. Justly may she rejoice, and proudly may she lift up her noble head. Fearless of contradiction and exaggeration may the genius of history and eloquence proclaim her praises. Worthy does she appear of the joint homage of heaven and earth, because *her* God has always been the Lord—because, since the very day she was consecrated to the Most High by the venerable hands of her illustrious Apostle—since the very hour she swore an everlasting allegiance to His glory—she has never abandoned, never betrayed the sacred cause she then espoused; she has always remained inviolably attached to the form of worship which the incarnate Son of God made known to mankind, and which alone His heavenly Father is pleased to accept from His creatures upon earth. Several nations have separated from the Church that educated them in the sound principles of Christianity and civilization; they have undermined the altars which, for centuries, they revered and cherished; they have repudiated rights and privileges which formerly they asserted with a jealous honor. What a glorious contrast in the Irish people! How deservedly may they be styled: "The people whom God hath chosen for His inheritance." At all times the Catholic Church has occupied the foremost rank in their thoughts and affections. Her transcendent character of lawful spouse of Jesus Christ, and genuine Mother of all Christians, they have always vindicated, even at the sacrifice of all what the world clings to the most passionately. For over a thousand years they have proved loyal to all her interests, loyal even to the most heroic degree. Never have the ineffable charms of her countenance lost anything of their pristine ascendancy over her children of the Emerald.

Isle. The treasures of wisdom and mercy which she has at her disposal, they have never ceased to prize most highly, and avail themselves of to the utmost advantage. What a source of joy and glory must it be for the saint whom we publicly honor this day, to look down from his throne in the heavens upon the Celtic race which he ennobled by the preaching of the Gospel, and to find it still undegenerate, still retaining with undiminished—nay, with intensified lustre, the sublime dignity to which he elevated it! A halo of surpassing brilliancy encircles the brow of Catholic Ireland. In her heart there burns a triple love—a triple love which is symbolized by the triple leaf of the shamrock—a triple love which renders her the object of heaven's predilection, and of earth's congratulation. I mean her love for the faith, her love for the priesthood, and her love for the papacy.

If, dear brethren, there be in the world anything which should captivate the human heart, anything which ought to claim its unreserved homage, it is most assuredly the beauty of christian faith. Who can be conscious of its merits, and refuse to yield it the tribute of his love? It stands inaccessible to all pernicious influences. It cannot be dimmed by the shadow of doubt, or destroyed by the fatal breath of error. It dates from the ages long since gone by, and blooms with all the freshness of a parenial spring. Christian faith, taken objectively, is identical with the system of religion which our Divine Lord established upon earth, whose various parts blend in such marvellous harmony, and whose scope comprises our spiritual and eternal welfare. Singularly grand are the features which mark Ireland's love for this faith—its spontaneity, its generosity and its zealousness, furnish a theme for unbounded admiration.

What unanticipated success did not attend the Apostolate of St. Patrick among the Irish ! What a brilliant transfiguration did he witness with his own eyes ! What a harvest of souls did he reap with his own hands ! Little did he expect that the grain of mustard seed which he planted in the soil could, in his lifetime, strike such deep roots, and grow up into the magnificent tree whose widespread branches overshadowed the whole island. Little could he hope that Paganism would cede a single inch of its territory, or surrender the empire which, for hundreds of years, it had been wielding, till it had exhausted all the resources it could command. Much reason had he to fear that the Gospel would meet the deadliest antagonism, and would triumph in all the sublimity of its dogma and in all the purity of its morality, only after a most obstinate and protracted struggle, and through the virtue of martyrdom. But what took place ? Before he had closed his mortal career, he beheld Christianity reigning with undisputed authority over the minds and hearts of the Irish people. He saw the banner of the cross floating in full security over the length and breadth of their all-lovely land. Countless conquests had he obtained for heaven. Wherever he had directed his steps, the grace of God, which he dispensed, operated with the most prodigious results. With what transports of enthusiasm was he listened to while announcing the glad tidings of salvation ! Who will describe the profound and lasting impressions which he produced, as he spoke of God's only son dying in our stead upon the hill of Calvary ? as He pointed out, at the foot of the cross, his heart-broken and ever-virginal mother ; as he convincingly discoursed upon the divinity of the Church—the most disinterested benefactress of the human race, and unerring inter-

pretress of truth. Often must St. Patrick have wondered at the cheerful readiness which prompted the natives of Ireland to accept his teachings. Soon did they turn away from the superstition of Paganism; soon did they become enamoured with the doctrines inculcated by the Gospel. Unique is the glory which the conversion of our ancestors has procured us. It was effected with a most exceptional rapidity, and without the least effusion of blood. "While," says Moore, "in all other countries the introduction of Christianity has been the slow work of time, in Ireland, on the contrary, Christianity burst forth at the first ray of Apostolic light, and with the sudden ripeness of a northern summer, at once covered the whole land. Chiefs at variance in all else, agreed in meeting beneath the Christian banner, and the proud Druid and bard laid their superstitions meekly at the foot of the cross; nor (by a singular blessing of Providence, unexampled indeed in the whole history of the Church) was there a single drop of blood shed on account of religion through the entire course of this mild Christian revolution, by which in the space of a few years, all Ireland was brought tranquilly under the dominion of the Gospel."

The spontaneity which our forefathers displayed in receiving the faith, is equalled only by the generosity manifested in its preservation by succeeding generations. Is there anything, however dear it may be, which, till our own days, the children of St. Patrick have not parted with, rather than forfeit the legacy which he bequeathed them? Is there any sacrifice possible which they have not realized rather than disinherit the charter of Christian grandeur which he endowed them with, rather than reject the time-honored religion of Jesus Christ, and adopt the new-fangled

theory of any self-commissioned teacher? Something bordering on the incredible has been their devotedness to the faith. Their minds have always bowed down to its teachings with the most unfeigned submission; their hearts have always cherished them with the tenderest affection; their lips have always professed them with the most fearless intrepidity, and their lives have always guarded them with the most unswerving fidelity. Ah! what has it not cost the Irish people to keep in their possession the creed of their beloved Apostle? What have they spared, sooner than allow it to be wrested from their bosom? Was it any temporal advantage which they could enjoy? No. Was it wealth or rank? No. Was it liberty, life, or the very land which they adore? No, no, no. They passed through a most appalling ordeal; groaned under the galling yoke of tyranny; writhed under the merciless lash of persecution, and fell—fell fainting under the weight of the cross. Yet they did not cease to cling as resolutely as ever to the faith of St. Patrick; they would not, even in the very agony of death, disengage from its embrace. When heresy had deprived them of all terrestrial goods, and had placed them in a most helpless and most wretched condition, she then flattered herself with the prospect of an easy and brilliant conquest. But she was doomed to disappointment. "Apostatize," she cried out, "and whatever I can bestow, you shall obtain. You are poor; apostatize, and I will enrich you. You are despised; apostatize, and I will have you both esteemed and honored. You are slaves; apostatize, and I will break your chains asunder, and restore you to all the blessings of freedom." Begone! begone! thou treacherous enemy of Jesus Christ. Away with all thy silver. Away with all thy gold. They will not bribe us to sell, as Judas did, our Divine

Lord. Away! away, with all the favors thou canst dispose of. Never—never will they induce us to deny the truths which a God has sealed with his most precious blood. Keep us, if it suits thee, in poverty—in contempt, and in slavery—we ask nothing better; sooner than exchange our belief for thy presumptuous speculations—our peace and security for thy restless anxiety. Drive us into exile if thou chooseth, or inflict whatever form of death thy infernal ingenuity may devise. Never shall we worship at thy unhallowed shrine. Never shall we obey, love, or respect thee. Impartial history vouches for the sincerity of these dispositions in the language of the most indisputable facts. Nowhere has Protestantism gone farther, and done less than upon Irish soil. Nowhere else did Catholicism in modern times encounter a more formidable adversary. Yet nowhere else did this adversary sustain a more shameful defeat. It is true, Protestantism succeeded in destroying Ireland's schools, convents, monasteries, and churches; but never, never has it been able to boast of having accomplished the ruin of her Faith. Like a rock of invincible strength has it borne, unimpaired, the rudest shocks of violence; and still does it stand out in all the grandeur of its ancient proportions. The Irish have loved the Faith without shrinking from any sacrifice, and have thus won for their country the palm of martyrdom. The divine impulse of zeal has also crowned it with the glory of the Apostolate, and with such a glory as perhaps no other country can aspire to.

Scarcely did St. Patrick communicate to Ireland the inestimable benefits of Christianity, when she began to diffuse them throughout the various parts of Europe. Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Norway, and even Iceland, have abun-

dantly shared in the fruits of her apostolical labors. But, during the last two hundred and fifty years, the world has been given to witness a most brilliant phase in her missionary career. Under most peculiar circumstances, has she been propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and forwarding the interests of His Divine Religion. Guided by the hand of Providence, thousands—nay, hundreds of thousands of her loving children have left the dear old land of Innisfail, and crossed the seas,—laden, not with temporal riches, which they were dispossessed of,—but with treasures of the highest supernatural excellence. God had entrusted them with a special destiny, and in its realization, they proved worthy of His choice. Wherever England extended her empire, they established or largely contributed to maintain the empire of Christian truth. Wherever the Anglo-Saxon tongue was introduced, or wherever it prevails, there do they unfurl the standard of the true Faith; the standard which they have never rent or sullied; the standard under whose shadow have served innumerable generations of Christian martyrs, virgins and confessors. In the very heart of London and Edinburgh; on the distant shores of the East Indies and Australia; in every corner of the Dominion of Canada; in all the colonies subject to British rule; in all the States which constitute the Grand Republic of Western America, there the Irish are to be found; and with the Irish the doctrines of the Catholic Church. Without fear or blush do they profess them, and triumphantly do they vindicate them. Nothing can reconcile their minds to the unjustifiable principle upon which heresy rests its claim. They cannot help preferring God's authority to all human usurpation. They have pledged themselves to Christ's own Spouse, and find it impossible to love any form whatever which Protestantism

may assume. Upon whatever soil they fix their abode, they adhere at all hazards, and in the face of all difficulties, to the teachings which they have been transmitted since the days of their sainted Apostle. Under whichever sky they live, they show themselves pre-eminently a missionary people—a people animated with an ardent desire to have God known, loved and served as He should be—a people who, to honor Him, erect temples which oftentimes bespeak an opulence they do not enjoy. Justly to them may be applied the terse language of the august Metropolitan of Ontario: "They," writes he, "built fine churches before they had fine houses. The word was: God's house first." Ireland's love for the Priesthood is not less conspicuous than her love for the Faith.

What an exalted, and what an accurate idea does she entertain of the sacerdotal dignity! How thoroughly influenced is she by its supernatural character! She views the Priest from the real Scriptural standpoint. As St. Paul recommends, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, she considers him as the Minister of Christ, and the Dispenser of the mysteries of God. In her eyes he is appointed to perpetuate the mission which our Blessed Saviour was engaged in, during his mortal career. When he mounts the pulpit, it is to speak as the ambassador of the Most High; it is to make known what He requires us to believe, and what He requires us to do. When at the baptismal font he pours the waters of regeneration; when in the confessional he absolves the repentant sinner; when at the altar, he consecrates the body and blood of our Divine Lord, and offers up in sacrifice the adorable victim of Calvary; when to the dying he administers the sacrament of Extreme Unction, it is in the person, and with the authority of Jesus Christ he

acts. No wonder, then, that the Irish people should surround the priest with all the reverential love which characterizes them. No wonder they should salute him wherever they meet him; kiss the hands which so often bless them; gather with so much respect the words of life which fall from his sacred lips; receive him into their homesteads with so much pride and so much delight; avenge in word and deed the insults which aim at his person; think all they have, and all they do, is too little, is nothing, for the living image and visible representative of the incarnate Son of God. Remember how, in the penal times, they harboured him, and even divided with him the last morsel of bread they had. Remember how, rather than have him exposed to the fury of blood-thirsty fanatics, they unhesitatingly sacrificed their property, their liberty, nay their very lives. The Disciples and Apostles fled when the Jews sought to put their Divine Master to death. The Irish stood by his anointed vicar, closer than ever, when English prejudice and English hatred sought an opportunity to torture and destroy him. Their love for the priest is also a love of confidence and co-operation. Who is, if I may so speak, the idol of their hearts? Is it not the "Sogarth Aroon?"* Whom do they entrust with all the secrets of their souls? Is it not the "Sogarth Aroon?" When they need advice, whom do they consult upon spiritual, and often temporal matters? Is it not the "Sogarth Aroon?" When the trials of life dishearten them, or when afflictions of any kind visit them, who will encourage and console them? Is it not the "Sogarth Aroon?" Ah, well do they know, and well do they feel that, if upon this earth, there be

* Darling Priest.

pure and energetic sympathy, it is to be found in the heart of their "Sogarth Aroon." Their joys are his joys; their sorrows are his sorrows. Night and day does he labor for their eternal welfare; he prides and delights in their material prosperity, and contributes as far as lies in his power to advance their temporal interests. Though he enters not the field of politics, yet he is not an idle spectator. Like Moses, he ascends the mount, and with hands uplifted in fervent prayer invokes the benediction of Heaven upon whatever measure may prove advantageous to his beloved fellow-countrymen. The Catholic Irish take a most honest pride in co-operating with the priest in all the works of zeal he may undertake. Scanty indeed are their pecuniary resources. Yet, when placed in his hands, they produce a marvelous amount of good. Do they not enable him to establish schools where a sound education is imparted; where all the faculties of the mind develop under the most favorable auspices; where every personal, domestic and social virtue is taught to be esteemed and practised? Do they not enable him to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and alleviate every sort of misery to which man is subject? Do they not enable him to maintain institutions where orphans find protection, the homeless a shelter, the aged and infirm all the tender and vigilant care they may require? Moreover, the Irish second the priest by the liberal livelihood they procure him, by the generous sums of money they devote to the erection of churches, and more especially by the countless number of children they consecrate to the service of the altar.

Now, we come to Ireland's love for the Papacy—a love which was coeval with her vocation to the light of the Gospel—a love which, in the course of subsequent ages, nothing could alter, weaken

or destroy. "Patrick," says Usher, the Protestant Archbishop of Armagh, "had a special regard for the Church of Rome." This special regard he communicated to his children of the Emerald Isle, and they have always cherished it with the fondest devotion. At every period of their history they may exclaim with St. Columban: "We are closely bound to the chair of Holy Peter; for, though Rome is great and famous, yet, among us it is great and renowned through this chair alone." In many ways has Ireland shown her profound attachment to the Pope. Not only did she hasten to accept and profess the dogmas which he has defined; not only did she uphold his spiritual authority with all the solid learning of her theologians, and with all the impassioned eloquence of her pulpit orators; she also vindicated her temporal power upon the field of battle with the blood of her valiant sons. All his interests should be most sacred in her eyes, and most dear to her heart. Since the days of St. Patrick, her faith has never altered. Like the shamrock which grows upon her soil, it is as fresh and as green to-day as ever it was in the past. Like this immortal little plant, it survives the wreck of ages, and brings to our memory the brightest and darkest pages of her annals. But if she has never lost the true faith, if she has always preserved it in its purity and integrity, it is owing to the Papacy. "Under Providence," says a distinguished Irish prelate, "we are indebted to the paternal guidance and protection of the Popes, that at the present day, on the return of comparative peace, the tree of Divine faith is found still firmly rooted in our soil, and ever rich in the choicest fruits of piety, and our Church as radiant with the sacred light of Bethlehem as in the golden spring time of our early youth." It is also to the Papacy we should ascribe the preservation

of Ireland's national existence. Superhuman efforts have been made, and made again, to wipe her off from the face of the earth, and blot out her name from the map of Europe. What has been the result? These superhuman efforts have failed, and thanks to the influence of the Papacy. Listen to the renowned historian and orator, the Protestant nobleman, Lord Macaulay, as he bears testimony to the truth of this assertion. In 1845, he thus addressed the House of Commons with the intention of counteracting a most unjust and violent measure which was contemplated against the Irish:—"It is not under one or even twenty administrations, but for centuries that we have employed the sword against the Catholics of Ireland. We have tried famine. We have had recourse to all the artifices of the Draconian laws; we have tried unbridled extermination, not to suppress or conquer a detested race, but to eradicate every trace of this people from the land of its birth. And what has come of it? Have we succeeded? We have not been able to extirpate them, nor even weaken them. They have increased successively from two to five, and from five to seven millions. Ought we then to return to the superannuated policy of former times, and render them yet stronger by persecution? I know history, I have studied history, but I confess my incapacity to find in it a satisfactory explanation of this fact. But if I were able, standing beneath the dome of St. Peter's at Rome, to read, with the faith of a Roman Catholic the inscription traced around it: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,' then indeed I could solve the problem of the history of Ireland." We have now, dear brethren, seen the love of Catholic Ireland for the faith, for the priesthood, and for the papacy. What a contin-

uous stream of glory has it not shed over the whole history of her career! With what delight may we not contemplate her fidelity to the Most High during a space of more than fourteen hundred years! With what pride may we not recall the spontaneity with which she received the faith of Jesus Christ, the generosity with which she maintained it, and the Apostolic zeal with which she propagated it! This same faith do we possess, we in whose veins flows the noble blood of Catholic Ireland. "Are we not," in the language of one of her greatest saints, "the disciples of St. Peter and St. Paul, and the other Apostles inspired by the Holy Ghost? Do you receive any other doctrine save that which is Apostolical and Divine?" With what scrupulous care therefore, should we not guard our faith! should we not shun all the dangers to which it may be exposed? Should we not avoid the reading of all books and newspapers which make it a practice to attack morality or the religion we profess? Should we not keep away from all places of heretical worship, comply with all our obligations, and strive to excel in every Christian virtue? From the very days of St. Patrick down to our own times, the Catholic Irish have given signal proofs of their attachment to the clergy. Always have they loved the priest with a reverential, with a confiding, and with a co-operative love. Thus also should we love him. Wherever we are, and in whatever circumstances we may be placed, we should uphold his honor, and promote the interests he is charged with. Strange and unworthy would it be on our part, ever to join any organization which tends to foster the spirit of insubordination, ever to sanction any language, or countenance any deed which might reflect discredit upon the elect of the sanctuary—upon the anointed of the Lord.

This day, dear brethren, we have admired together the love of Ireland for the divine institution of the Papacy. And justly may we rejoice at the generous response which, upon every occasion, it calls forth from the Irish Catholics of Montreal. We, Irish Catholics of this city; yes, we are proud to think it; yes, we are still prouder to say it; we venerate the See of Blessed Peter, and, till our last breath, we will cling to the Rock upon which Jesus Christ has built His indestructible church. The Pope, yes, we love him—no matter how much he may be abused, and no matter by whom he be insulted. We love with a love which words cannot express. We love him with a love which rises superior to every sacrifice. Oh! could we only discover in our hearts a single fibre which does not vibrate for the legitimate successor of the Prince of the Apostles, a single fibre which does not vibrate for the supreme pastor of Christ's own flock—for the Father who, upon earth, shares the most in the paternal tenderness of God's own heart—we would pluck it, root it out, on the very instant. In the world there are two spots which, throughout life, we should cherish with predilection: the home of our forefathers, and the home of the sovereign Pontiffs. O Erin! O Rome! O Erin! O thou "first flower of the earth, and first gem of the sea," live forever, and reign forever in our minds and hearts. O Erin! Never shall we forget thee—

"Forget Ireland! No, while there's life in this heart,
It shall never forget thee, all lorn as thou art,
More dear in thy sorrow, thy gloom and thy showers
Than the rest of the world in their sunniest hours."

Never shall we forget thy heath-clad hills, thy lovely valleys, thy enchanting lakes and picturesque rivers. Ever dear to our hearts shall be, yes, the very clay of thy soil. O Rome! O Rome of Christ! O Eternal City!

at thy feet we lay all the chivalry of Erin's sons—all the tender and generous sympathy of Erin's daughters—all the talents and munificence of Erin's devoted children throughout the world. Accept our offering. Only, only call us thy own; but call us thy own forever—forever. This is all we ask in return.



